

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 59 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action dated July 21, 2003, Claims 1 and 5-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; Claims 1, 5-8, 10 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP11-126387 (herein JP '387); Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Yoshinari et al.; Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Kikuchi et al.; Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Applicants' Figure 3; Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Maro et al.; Claims 17, 21-25 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP '387; Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Yoshinari et al.; Claims 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Kikuchi et al.; Claim 29 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Applicants' Figure 3; Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP '387 and Maro et al.; Claims 32, 36-39, 41 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Maro et al.; Claims 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Maro et al.; Claim 40 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maro et al. in view of Yoshinari et al. and JP '387; Claims 42 and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maro et al. and Kikuchi et al.; Claims 45-50, 52 and 56-58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Maro et al.;

Claim 51 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maro et al. in view of Yoshinari et al. and JP '387; and Claims 53 and 54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maro et al. and Kikuchi et al.

Applicants thank Examiner Psitos for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representative on January 21, 2004. During the interview, differences between the claims and the applied art were discussed. Further, Examiner Psitos suggested that Claim 1 would be allowable if the last feature of Claim 1 is recited in the preamble of Claim 1.

In view of this indication, Claim 1 is amended as suggested by Examiner Psitos without adding new matter. In addition, Claim 8 is amended to correct its dependency as suggested in the Advisory Action. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 59 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over the applied art.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.


Respectfully submitted,

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